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THE LANGUAGE OF ACHILLES: THE ΟΧΘΗΣΑΣ FORMULAS

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In this paper we shall examine the formulas of deliberation used in the *Iliad* to outline the inner debates of mortals. First we shall identify the particular phrases which compose a clearly-recognizable, stereotypic pattern, and then focus upon deviation from such patterning in the case of Achilles, particularly after his decision to let Patroclus go into battle (Book 16). Such comparative study of formulaic usage within the poem both reveals the sensitivity of Homeric language to situation and demonstrates the fruitfulness of this approach in our identification of the Homeric art of characterization. In its larger purpose, this study continues the debate about tradition and innovation, the formulaic and the expressive, the stereotypic and the particular in regard to Homeric control of the highly stylized, inherited language of Greek oral poetry.

I. The Non-Achillean Formulas of Deliberation

Before Book 11 of the *Iliad*, all examples of inner debate are recorded in the third-person narrative, introduced by the phrase διάνδιχα μερμήριζειν or ὁρμαίνειν διχθάδα. The delineation which follows is comparative in nature, expressed by an either/or (ἤ/ἦε) outline of the perceived alternatives. Resolution is also signified by the comparative (usually κέρδιον), either once a hero has come to a decision unaided by a divinity or after divine intervention when human choice defers to divine will.

Typically, inner debates in the narrative occur when a hero is unexpectedly caught in the forefront of battle and the narrator describes the hero's indecision whether to stand and fight or to retreat back into the melee and safety. The most concise example of such questioning is found in Book 13 where the narrator outlines Deiphobus' inner thoughts when challenged by Idomeneus to single combat. The Trojan, reaching a decision without the aid of a god, chooses retreat. The either/or nature of the debate and the comparative quality of the decision are clearly identifiable:

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Ὡς φάτο, Δηΐφοβος δὲ διάνδιχα μερμήριξεν,
ἦ τινά που Τρώων ἑταρίσσαιτο μεγαθύμων
ἂψ ἀναχωρήσας, ἦ πειρήσαιτο καὶ οἷος.
ὧδε δέ οἱ φρονέοντι δοάσσατο κέρδιον εἶναι,
βῆναι ἐπ' Αἰνείαν. . . . (*Iliad* 13.455–59)

There are eight inner debates of this type recorded in the narrative of the *Iliad*,[1] seven of which follow the basic outline identified in the example above.[2] In all instances, the formulaic pattern is standard and the comparative mode of thinking is clear.[3]

Starting with Book 11, the poet gives voice to the inner thoughts of heroes as they speak in first-person monologue or soliloquy form to their own *thumos*. There are seven such soliloquies: four by other heroes, three by Achilles, all introduced by the formula ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν. With the exception of the lone example in Book 11, all occur later in the poem than the narrative examples, between Books 17 and 22 when the consequences of war become most intense.[4] Bernard Fenik has recently shown how the four soliloquies by other mortals are uniquely and appropriately tailored to the circumstances, the contest, and the individual, that "they are neither interchangeable nor moveable." He has also recognized their highly standardized

[1] The eight inner debates found in the narrative are in order of appearance: 1.188–93 (Achilles); 5.671–76 (Odysseus); 8.167–70 (Diomedes); 10.503–7 (Diomedes); 13.455–59 (Deiphobus); 14.20–24 (Nestor); 16.644–55 (Zeus); 16.712–15 (Hector). Heroes whose thoughts are recorded in the narrative, whether they reach decision on their own or are directed by a god, tend to withdraw into the ranks (as with Deiphobus), or to yield from aggressive action (as with Achilles, to be discussed in section II below). Apollo's urging on of Hector in the abbreviated debate of 16.712ff. is the lone exception.

[2] For an either/or construction after *mermêrizein* where *kerdion* marks resolution, see 16.644ff. (Zeus); for a similar construction after *hormainein* (*hôrmaine daizomenos . . . dichthadia)* with *kerdion*, see 14.20ff. (Nestor). For inner debates introduced by *mermêrizein* where a god intervenes, see 5.671ff. (Athena stops Odysseus) and 10.503ff. (Athena stops Diomedes). For a similar, but abbreviated, construction with the verb *dizein*, see 16.712ff. (Apollo in the likeness of a man urges Hector to go forward in batile as Hector has been pondering retreat). For the one instance where the comparative either/or construction does not follow a *mermêrizein* introduction, see 8.167ff. (Zeus stops Diomedes) to be discussed below, pages 15–16. (In 12.199, *mermêrizein* appears in the plural; no alternatives are specified.)

[3] The Deiphobus example reveals that the primary function of the inner debate is to outline alternatives. For the comparative nature of these narrative patterns, see Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, transl. T. G. Rosenmeyer (New York 1960[2]) 103–6, and his *Scenes from Greek Drama* (Berkeley 1964) chap. 1; see also Chr. Voigt, *Überlegung und Entscheidung, Studien zur Selbstauffassung des Menschen bei Homer* (Berlin 1934) now Beiträge zur Klassische Philologie 48 (Meisenheim 1972) 11f. and 84ff.

[4] Monologues are never used to outline the thoughts of the gods. For the concentration of these "speeches" between Books 17 and 22, see C. Hentze, although the evidence need not support his analytical theories, "Die Monologe in den homerischen Epen," *Philologus* 17 (1904) 14–22. (Hereafter referred to as Hentze.)

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cast, clearly "conceived and executed after a single pattern."[5] They also clearly follow a pattern of comparative thought already witnessed in narrative inner debate. The context is the same: a hero suddenly finds himself alone in the forefront of battle. Addressing his *thumos*, ὀχθήσας, he opens his monologue with a cry of pain (ὤ μοι ἐγώ) followed by an either/or delineation of alternatives. As with the inner debates of the narrative, when a hero speaks in soliloquy, he ponders whether he should stand alone and risk death or withdraw. The process of deliberation is terminated by the common formula "But why did my dear heart consider these things?" which signals decision. Unlike the narrative examples, in every instance, the hero reaches a decision unaided: a god never intervenes.

Like the soliloquy of drama which unfolds for us the inner process by which a character commits himself to a course of action, the soliloquies in Homer allow the poet to explain the actions of his heroes in terms of their own motives.[6] The soliloquy of Book 11 is the shortest and simplest of these four. Odysseus, realizing that he is caught alone before the Trojans, debates his course of action with himself:

Οἰώθη δ' Ὀδυσεὺς δουρικλυτός, οὐδέ τις αὐτῷ
Ἀργείων παρέμεινεν, ἐπεὶ φόβος ἔλλαβε πάντας·
ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
"ὤ μοι ἐγώ, τί πάθω; μέγα μὲν κακὸν αἴ κε φέβωμαι
πληθὺν ταρβήσας· τὸ δὲ ῥίγιον αἴ κεν ἁλώω
μοῦνος· τοὺς δ' ἄλλους Δαναοὺς ἐφόβησε Κρονίων.
ἀλλὰ τίη μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός;
οἶδα γὰρ ὅττι κακοὶ μὲν ἀποίχονται πολέμοιο,
ὃς δέ κ' ἀριστεύῃσι μάχῃ ἔνι, τὸν δὲ μάλα χρεὼ
ἑστάμεναι κρατερῶς, ἤ τ' ἔβλητ' ἤ τ' ἔβαλ' ἄλλον."
Ὣς ὁ ταῦθ' ὥρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,
τόφρα δ' ἐπὶ Τρώων στίχες ἦλυθον ἀσπιστάων,
ἔλσαν δ' ἐν μέσσοισι, μετὰ σφίσι πῆμα τιθέντες. (*Iliad* 11.401–13)

The return to narrative begins with the phrase "As he considered these things. . . ." It brings us back from reflection to action, and resembles the

[5] B. Fenik, "Stylization and Variety: Four Monologues in the *Iliad*," in *Homer: Tradition and Invention*, ed. B. Fenik (Leiden 1978) 89 and 69, respectively. Bibliography on Homeric soliloquies is too large to list here. I mention only those most useful to me: D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der Ilias* (Berlin 1970) 37–39; A. W. H. Adkins, "Threatening, Abusing and Feeling Angry in the Homeric Poems," *JHS* 89 (1969) 7–21, esp. 12–18; J. Russo and B. Simon, "Homeric Psychology and the Oral Epic Tradition," *J. of the Hist. of Ideas* 29 (1968) 483–98 (reprinted in *Essays on the Iliad*, ed. John Wright [Bloomington, Ind. 1978]); B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* (Wiesbaden 1968) 96ff. and 159ff.; W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin 1933) 106–15 (*mermêrizein*); Hentze 12–30, esp. 12–20 (*ochthêsas*); Walter Leaf, *The Iliad* (London 1902[2]) ad. 17.90.

[6] Hentze (above, note 4) 17; contrast the narrative report of a person's decision which is simply stated by the poet with no explanation of the individual's motives.

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concluding line of the μερμηρίζειν debates found in the narrative[7]—another indication that the two patterns are cast from a single mold.

The derivation of the epic word ὀχθήσας which introduces these "speeches" between a hero and his *thumos* is uncertain.[8] From context it seems to convey "the tension in the Homeric hero between doing what he thinks he is obliged by his society to do and doing what he as an individual concerned with his personal welfare wants to do. Thus it conveys all at once a psychological response of distress, frustration and anger."[9] The private thoughts of a hero question the values of heroic activity as he could never do publicly. Thus, it is the privileged domain of the soliloquy to convey the anxiety of the hero as he moves from indecision to resolution, from fear to courage, from thought to reaffirmation of heroic action. Although the soliloquy calls into question the values of society, it also serves to highlight the particular nature of heroism as conceived in the *Iliad*. Iliadic heroism is not only action, but action born from the consciousness of death and the recognition of the limits of human existence.[10]

The three other monologues not delivered by Achilles are clearly related to Odysseus' soliloquy in form and substance. As Menelaus sees Hector rushing towards him to seize the body of Patroclus, he speaks to his *thumos* in fear (17.90–117). The soliloquy, introduced by the phrase ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν, once again opens with

[7] Cf. *Iliad* 1.193 and 10.507 of the narrative form and 17.107 of the soliloquy model. Also see 8.170 and 5.671 of the narrative type.

[8] As a participle, *ochthêsas* is found eighteen times in the *Iliad*, nine times in the *Odyssey*, in only two formulaic phrases, and once in *Theogony* 558, when Zeus is about to answer Prometheus and select one of the sacrificial offerings. In the narrative, but never used by a speaker about himself, it introduces the speech of man or god when suddenly confronted by a startling situation. Once a decision is reached, or action intervenes, the mood of *ochthêsas* seems to be concluded. Hesychius, and the ancients generally, regarded the word as equivalent to *stenei, stenazei*. Of *ochthêsas*, Hesychius says: στενάξας. βαρυνθείς· ἄχθος γὰρ βάρος. ἢ μετεωρισθεὶς τὴν ψυχήν, ἀπὸ τῶν ὄχθων, ὅ ἐστι τοῦ ἀναστήματος. For the derivation from *achthos*, see Hermann, *Gött. Nachr.* (1918) 286–88. Moderns have generally been less satisfied with the etymology from *achthos*; H. Frisk regards *ochthêsas* as derived from *echthomai, echthô*, on analogy with *phobeô* and *phebomai*, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1960). Cf. Eduard Schwyzer, *Griechische Grammatik* (1934) I 719, note 13. It is rendered by *LSJ* "be sorely angered, vexed in spirit"; Ebeling "aegre fero, indignor"; Chantraine "être troublé, avoir de l'humeur"; so J. Audiat, "Une Formule homérique: *meg' ochthēsas*," *REA* (1947) 41–57, says it refers to the troubled or indignant spirit: "la naissance d'un trouble subit et profond dans l'âme d'une divinité ou d'un héros" (57). Adkins (above, note 5) writes that the word "denotes the frame of mind of a man who has received an unpleasant stimulus from his environment . . . and who says 'what am I to do?' in frustrated and angry distress and bafflement" (12).

[9] Adkins (above, note 5) 15.

[10] Cf. Martin Mueller, "Knowledge and Delusion in the *Iliad*," *Mosaic* 3 (1970) 86–103, (now also in Wright [above, note 5] 105–23).

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a cry of desperation. The warrior imagines he may choose between either (εἰ μέν) leaving the body of Patroclus and running the risk of being reproached by one of the Danaans, or (εἰ δέ) fighting Hector and the Trojans. Menelaus cuts debate short by asking himself why his heart considered these things. Unlike Odysseus, he decides to retreat, like a lion who feels cold fear in his heart as he is chased by dogs and shepherds. The transition from monologue to narrative is marked by the same phrase as in 11.401–2. In Menelaus' soliloquy as in Odysseus', the questioning (if not the resolution) of heroic valor, the fear of death, and the skeletal frame of the speech are stereotypic.

In the third example, as the Trojan Agenor sees Achilles rushing upon him, he breaks into soliloquy. The pattern of this address closely follows the two mentioned. In this instance, inspired by Apollo, Agenor decides to stand firm and await his foe alone. Transition from speech to narrative occurs as follows:

> Ὡς εἰπὼν Ἀχιλῆα ἀλεὶς μένεν, ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ
> ἄλκιμον ὁρμᾶτο πτολεμίζειν ἠδὲ μάχεσθαι. (*Iliad* 21.570–71)

Battle ensues and Agenor is rescued from death by Apollo.

One hundred and forty lines later, in Book 22, awaiting the approaching Achilles, Hector speaks to his *thumos* to gain courage. Like Agenor, Hector decides to stand firm against Achilles' attack; but after his resolve, he suddenly loses courage and runs. Agenor's soliloquy clearly anticipates this one and seems to underline the magnitude of Hector's by establishing "the categories which the great sequel will deepen and enlarge."[11] We shall look at it in a moment.

As we have already seen, the soliloquy (and to a lesser extent the narrative) form of inner thought may result in renewed heroic activity, but because the inner debates also imply hesistation, they record a momentary weakening, or questioning, of heroic temper. In many of the examples, one sees in the inner debate a distance between the impulse to live and the compunction to act. A unique use of the μερμηρίζειν pattern with Diomedes in Book 8, however, omits the either/or construction and shows that this hero even in the moment of reflection is not constrained by the terror of war or the fear of death.

> Ὡς φάτο, Τυδείδης δὲ διάνδιχα μερμήριξεν,
> ἵππους τε στρέψαι καὶ ἐναντίβιον μαχέσασθαι.
> τρὶς μὲν μερμήριξε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν,
> τρὶς δ' ἄρ' ἀπ' Ἰδαίων ὀρέων κτύπε μητίετα Ζεὺς
> σῆμα τιθεὶς Τρώεσσι, μάχης ἑτεραλκέα νίκην. (*Iliad* 8.167–71)

[11] Fenik, "Stylization and Variety," 80 (above, note 5); cf. Peter von der Mühll, *Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (Basel 1952) 327 and 334–35; Leaf, *ad* 21.552.

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Diomedes decides (three times) without deliberation what to do, but he is thwarted on each occasion by the warning from Zeus to withdraw. The hesitation, quite imaginable after such divine intervention, is suggested in the phrase "he pondered twofold" and "three times he pondered . . . ," but to portray Diomedes' enthusiasm Homer shows only one half of the hero's mind. The elaboration of the alternatives which occurs after all other Iliadic uses of διάνδιχα μερμηρίζειν has been avoided, it appears, because Diomedes in his thirst for war shows no fear or need for reflection. Perhaps the absence of comparative or either/or thought patterns for Ajax, even in times of stress (compare his retreats of 11.544–74 and 16.101–23), reflects the truly stalwart nature of that hero.

In contrast to mortals, the gods when they ponder (μερμηρίζειν), do not do so with fear and confusion characteristic of human thought and the comparative; rather they usually ponder how (ὅπως or ὡς) they will act. Thus in Book 2 Zeus wonders during the night how he might honor Achilles.

> ἀλλ' ὅ γε μερμήριζε κατὰ φρένα ὡς Ἀχιλῆα
> τιμήσῃ, ὀλέσῃ δὲ πολέας ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
> ἥδε δέ οἱ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή,
> πέμψαι ἐπ' Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι οὖλον Ὄνειρον. (*Iliad* 2.3–6)

He does not ask which is the better but what is the best plan.[12] Humans, of course, on occasion consider what is the best plan but never with the verb μερμηρίζω.[13]

The comparative nature of inner thought is thus particularly characteristic of humans, expressive of frailty and indecision in the face of danger. The crowning display of this manner of thinking occurs in Hector's soliloquy as he awaits Achilles' attack. As the soliloquy form itself is delayed to the second half of the *Iliad* where the action becomes more intense, the outstanding example of that balance between fear and courage appears in this, the last, of the addresses to one's *thumos*.

Hector's inner debate is the longest and most complex of the four non-Achillean debates in the *Iliad*. It shows greater expansion and more

[12] Cf. Hera, 14.159ff. (note also Hermes, 24.677–80 with the verb *hormainô . . . hopôs*). In 4.14–16, Zeus, pondering the fate of Troy, says to the assembly of the gods (note the plural) ἡμεῖς δὲ φραζώμεθ' ὅπως ἔσται τάδε ἔργα followed by an either/or delineation of alternatives. In an exception to this rule, Zeus at 16.644ff. ponders the fate of Patroclus in an either/or fashion with the verb *mermêrizein*.

[13] Mortals twice ponder *how*, both times in the plural and with the verb *phrazometha*, cf. 17.634–35 = 17.712–13. Mortals also consider the *aristê boulê*: Nestor, 7.324–25 and 9.93–99; Agamemnon, 10.17 (cf. Nestor, 9.103; Polydamas, 12.215 and 13.735); cf. *mêtis aristê*: Ajax, 17.634–35 = Thrasymedes, 17.712–13. Snell distinguishes between the self-control of mortals or gods when they determine an *aristê boulê*, and the helplessness of mortals as they ponder with *mermêrizein* and *êe* and *ê*, *Der Weg zum Denken und der Wahrheit: Studien zur frühgriechischen Sprache*, Hypomnemata 57 (Göttingen 1978) 82–84.

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variation than the others; there is also a greater subtlety in composition, which can only be appreciated against the sounding board of the familiar. Like the others, it is introduced by the formulaic ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν (22.98). There is the initial outburst of grief ὤ μοι ἐγών, immediately followed by εἰ μέν (22.99). Hector considers entering the gates to avoid Achilles but feels shame in front of the Trojans for having rejected Polydamas' advice the night before. To be persuaded would have been much better, he says (ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην· ἦ τ' ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν, 22.103). With an imaginary Trojan, he reflects once again, but now in a more elaborate form, upon that decision and the course of events which have taken place that day.

> "Εκτωρ ἦφι βίηφι πιθήσας ὤλεσε λαόν.'
> ὣς ἐρέουσιν· ἐμοὶ δὲ τότ' ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον εἴη
> ἄντην ἢ 'Αχιλῆα κατακτείναντα νέεσθαι,
> ἠέ κεν αὐτῷ ὀλέσθαι ἐϋκλειῶς πρὸ πόληος. (*Iliad* 22.107–10)

Hector then considers as a second alternative (εἰ δέ) the possibility of laying down his arms and coming to peace with Achilles through arbitration (22.111–21). Resolution is indicated by the characteristic ἀλλὰ τίη μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός (22.122); he decides it is impossible to negotiate or deal in a compassionate manner with Achilles and that battle is the only alternative. The transition from monologue to action is signified by the lines

> Ὣς ὅρμαινε μένων, ὁ δέ οἱ σχεδὸν ἦλθεν 'Αχιλλεὺς
> ἶσος 'Ενυαλίῳ, κορυθάϊκι πτολεμιστῇ,
> σείων Πηλιάδα μελίην κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον
> δεινήν. . . . (*Iliad* 22.131–34)

Unlike the narrative link after Agenor's soliloquy, where Agenor's courage is stressed (ἀλεὶς μένεν and ἦτορ ἄλκιμον ὥρμᾶτο πτολεμίζειν) and Achilles is described in the accusative (as the object of Agenor's confession), after Hector's soliloquy the subject abruptly changes from Hector to Achilles. The imposing rush of Achilles, described in three lines, seems to overwhelm the waiting Hector (Ὣς ὅρμαινε μένων).

In Hector's soliloquy both patterns discussed above flow together to delineate decision. The broad outline of Hector's soliloquy parallels the form found in the three other soliloquies considered. Unlike the others, however, the first alternative is considered separately and decision is signified by the comparative with ἦ . . . ἦ characteristic of decisions recorded in the narrative. Like Agenor, Hector considers two alternatives for escape, but in Hector's speech the decision to stand is made twice. Hector's noble effort to move from "hesitation to decision, from terror to resolution"[14] is thus more fully dramatized than is the decision in

[14] Edward Bradley, "*Theogony* 35," *SO* 44 (1969) 18–19.

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Agenor's soliloquy a few hundred lines before. Furthermore, the range of Hector's reflection encompasses a broader view of life and the war than found in the other soliloquies. In the process of acquiring a reasoned choice, rooted in courage, he reviews both the crucial decisions on the battlefield the day before where he feels the burden of his mistakes and he then turns back to reflect upon the original causes of the war and his role as the blameless defender of Troy. Hector's soliloquy thus recapitulates much of the action within the *Iliad* by describing the complex forces that operate upon him in the moments before his death. In one respect, Hector's soliloquy differs from all the others inasmuch as it is the only time a person addressed by another, here by his father and mother speaking from the walls of the city, does not give answer but turns inward and addresses his own heart. The explanation for this peculiarity is simple. The themes expressed in soliloquy—fear of death, the terror of facing impending assault alone, the vacillation between the desire for personal escape and the commitment to social responsibility—are private thoughts in the Homeric world and unsuitable for public utterance. Hector's soliloquy as he awaits Achilles reveals better than the others the feelings of anxiety and self-doubt emblematic of soliloquies throughout the *Iliad* and characteristic of either/or deliberation.

II. Achilles' Formulas of Deliberation

We have seen how standardized are the formulas of deliberation for the secondary characters of the *Iliad*. With Achilles, these formulas significantly differ in usage. Even in Book 1 where the first διάνδιχα μερμήριξεν formula introduces the inner debate of Achilles as he considers whether or not (ἦ/ἦε) to slay Agamemnon (1.888–93), we already witness a shift from conventional usage. Although the language here is closer to that of other heroes, the swiftness with which Achilles makes up his mind is atypical. The phrase "while he considered these things throughout his midriff and *thumos*" which marks the end of his debate, also marking closure in four other inner debates, is not followed by the customary τόφρα, "meanwhile"; rather, Achilles is already drawing his sword, ready to slay the king. Athena, when she intervenes, must thus stop Achilles from further action as well as change his mind.[15] This variation from the norm suggests Achilles' vigor of mind which cuts short the hesitation obvious in such thinking.[16]

[15] Compare 1.193 with 10.507 of the narrative *mermêrizein* forms and with 11.411–12, 17.706–7, and 18.15–16 of the soliloquy *ochthêsas* form. For the unusual swiftness of Athena's intervention in 1.188ff., see M. W. Edwards, "Convention and Individuality in *Iliad* 1," *HSCP* 84 (1980) 13–15.

[16] *Ameinon* signifies Achilles' acceptance of the goddess' command (1.217). The comparative is in answer to a new question (whether or not to obey the goddess) and not to

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After Book 16, the divergence in the application of these formulas to Achilles is even greater. His first ὀχθήσας soliloquy appears at the opening of Book 18. Sitting alone by his ships, he sees Antilochus approaching. At that moment he fears Patroclus has died (18.3–16). The framework of Achilles' speech to his *thumos* is similar to that of the soliloquies discussed above. It opens with the characteristic cry of pain (ὤ μοι ἐγώ) and a familiar formula resumes the narrative at the end of the speech ("while he considered these things throughout his midriff and *thumos*, meanwhile . . ." 18.15–16). The inner components of this speech, however, show little resemblance to the other soliloquies. Both the either/or structure and its concomitant "But why did my heart debate these things?" are absent.[17] In this soliloquy, he fears the fulfilment of a prediction that the best of the Myrmidons would die while he was still alive. He then recalls how he had ordered Patroclus back to his ship but only after the others were saved. Like other mortals in their monologues, Achilles confronts a fear of death, but his inner thoughts in 18 and after do not display debate or ambiguity. Unlike other men, the death that he fears is not his own.

Achilles has two soliloquies on the battlefield. In Book 20, a mist is cleared from his eyes and he stands amazed to find that Aeneas is no longer in front of him (20.343–53). The soliloquy, introduced by the characteristic ὀχθήσας formula, begins with an initial cry of pain, ὤ πόποι. He expresses great wonder that he can see the spear on the ground but not the man for whom it was intended. Aeneas, he reasons, must be dear to the gods and his boasts must have basis in fact. Having escaped from death, Aeneas will not try to fight me again. Now, he concludes, I must urge more Danaans against the Trojans. Ἦ, καὶ ἐπὶ στίχας ἆλτο resumes the narrative. Again we see that the either/or structure is not present and that his concern for death involves a question of the gods and is not self-directed. In Book 21, eager to slay Lycaon, son of Priam and a man whom he ransomed once before, Achilles once again, ὀχθήσας, speaks to his *thumos*, ὤ πόποι (21.53–64). Again Achilles speculates about mortality questioning whether even the Trojans he has already killed will rise up again from the darkness just as this man, previously ransomed, has come back. "But now is the time for him to taste my spear in order that I may know whether he will come back from death or the earth will hold him."

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his original indecision (whether or not to slay Agamemnon). For other instances of *ameinon* used to indicate choice where alternatives are articulated, see 1.116–17 (Agamemnon) and 9.423–24 (Achilles). Note the use of *ameinon*, and not *kerdion*, in this passage, although Snell cites this scene when stressing the literal meaning of *kerdion*.

[17] The formula "But why did my dear heart ponder these things?" is exclusive to the speech soliloquy pattern, with the exception of 22.385. There it is found within a speech of Achilles, but in this instance, Achilles dismisses the questions he had been contemplating and decides upon a completely new course of action.

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Decisiveness, objectivity, and reflection upon the nature of death are evident in all three soliloquies. The application of the word ὀχθήσας to Achilles differs from the definition offered above. It does not convey the tension in the hero between doing what he thinks he is obliged by society to do and doing what he as an individual concerned with his own welfare would prefer. Rather it prefaces an objective reflection about mortality. The emotional impact of ὀχθήσας expresses Achilles' recognition of the monumental seriousness of events (the death of Patroclus and the role of fate in it, a divine intervention on the battlefield when Poseidon rescues Aeneas, a focus upon death itself when he is about to kill a man he once saved), but with Achilles the emotion lacks deliberation or indecision. Moreover, his perspective is not self-oriented; he sees life from a distance that incorporates like his shield a broader view of the human condition and the nature of mortality, without vacillation or the desire for escape.

We should remember that Achilles' inner thoughts and view of life have not always been free from an either/or perspective. In Book 9 as he reflects about war and death, he imagines, for the only time in the epic, the possibility that he may choose his own fate: a long life without glory or a short one with it. The change in outlook from a characteristically human perspective to one freed from all ambiguity, a change which is fundamental to this hero who creates himself in the course of the poem, takes place nine books later as he anticipates the news of the death of his companion Patroclus.

When Achilles does announce his decision to re-enter battle, another ὀχθήσας formula introduces his speeches. (This is the only other usage of this participle in the poems.) This second ὀχθήσας formula prefaces dialogue, not soliloquy. From Books 16–20, it introduces four significant speeches of Achilles; before these books, the formula exclusively introduces the decisions of the gods (three of Zeus, two of Poseidon).[18] The speeches of the gods so introduced vary in significance: one marks a major turning point in the narrative, and the others articulate the destined place of man or god in the world order. In the first instance, the

[18] The *ochthêsas* participle also introduces one speech of Menelaus to Euphorbos moments before Menelaus kills him (17.18ff.). It is by far the weakest of all the participial uses in the *Iliad*, and is much more reminiscent of Odyssean use where *ochthêsas* introduces speeches which neither announce major turning points in the narrative nor articulate clear visions of one's fated position. This instance in 17.18, however, is near to an *ochthêsas* decision soliloquy delivered by Menelaus, 17.90. Perhaps its appearance in 17.18 was influenced by the later association in 17.90 or by the general density of the participle in this portion of the poem. Its occurrence with Menelaus does not undermine the significance of the previous observations about the general movement of the participle first with the gods and then with Achilles. The use in 17.18 may corroborate the observation, however, that Homer never operates in his use of formulaic language with what Adam Parry called "chemical purity" in "Language and Characterization in Homer," *HSCP* 76 (1972) 3.

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participle prefaces Zeus' response to Thetis in Book 1 when he reluctantly agrees to honor her plea (1.517–28). On other occasions, Zeus, ὀχθήσας, tells Hera that Troy may fall but that he must be granted the power to destroy whatever cities he may choose thereafter (4.30–49), or, ὀχθήσας, informs Poseidon that the Achaean wall loathed by the earth-shaking god will fall and be washed away at the end of the war (7.454–63). In these three speeches, Zeus either makes a decision which will cause a major change in the course of events or outlines the fate of man-made creations. In the other two examples, Poseidon is expressing his forced submission to the higher authority of his brother. In both, against his personal desire, he decides to withdraw from battle because he cannot equal the will of Zeus (8.208–11 and 15.184–200).[19]

The speeches of Achilles introduced by ὀχθήσας occur in circumstances that closely echo those described above for Zeus and Poseidon. The first instance of this phrase with Achilles occurs as he consents to the pleas of Patroclus that he be allowed to lead the Myrmidons into battle wearing Achilles' armor (16.48–101). Achilles' agreement "sets in motion a train of events that alters the whole course of the action and determines its direction for the rest of the poem."[20] As such it marks as momentous a turn in the poem as did the consent of Zeus to Thetis in Book 1 to honor Achilles. The ὀχθήσας phrase which prefaces these two speeches suggests that both Achilles and Zeus understand the magnitude of their decisions; the difference between the two is that Achilles' consent concerns himself. A further difference concerns the quality of their understanding. When Zeus agrees to honor Achilles, he seems to envision correctly the conflict he will have with Hera and perhaps even the grief and solitude the hero will come to experience, but when Achilles consents to Patroclus, he appears at his moment of greatest delusion. Though he comprehends the significance of his symbolic re-entry into battle through Patroclus, he cannot fully imagine the consequent death of Patroclus or himself.

The other applications of this formula to Achilles suggest a further association between Achilles and Zeus. At the end of Book 19, as he charges into battle, Achilles enjoins his two horses, Xanthus and Balius, to carry him safely back and not to leave him there dead like Patroclus. Given speech by Hera, the horse Xanthus answers Achilles, in part: "We

[19] In Book 8, Hera suggests that she and Poseidon assist the Achaeans, although Zeus has warned the immortals to stay out of battle. Poseidon, upset with Hera's suggestion, says he cannot go against the will of his brother, since Zeus is by far the stronger. In Book 15, Zeus sends Iris down from Olympos to warn Poseidon that he had best withdraw and that, if he does not stop aiding the Achaeans, Zeus will come down and force him to draw back. Poseidon, enraged, rebukes his brother but finally decides to withdraw.

[20] W. Minton, "Homer's Invocations of the Muses: Traditional Patterns," *TAPA* 91 (1960) 300.

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shall keep you safe for this time, o hard Achilles. And yet, the day of your death is near at hand; but it is not we who are to blame, but a great god and powerful Destiny." Xanthus then explains that as Apollo and Hector killed Patroclus, so it is destined for Achilles, as well, to be killed by a god and a mortal. To this unequivocal prophecy of doom, whose authenticity is underlined by the unique vehicle of communication, Achilles answers with equal clarity and straightforwardness: "Greatly troubled swift-footed Achilles addressed him: 'Xanthus, why do you prophesy my death? This is not for you. I myself know well it is destined for me to die here far from my beloved father and mother. But for all that I will not stop till the Trojans have had enough of my fighting.' He spoke and shouting he held on his singlehoofed horses among the foremost." (19.419–24) Like the Agenor scene described above,[21] it may be said that this episode adds little to what we already know about Achilles and the recognition of his fate. Such a point of view, however, in no way recognizes the dramatic power in this moment of candor between Achilles and the force which carries him forward to battle.[22]

The most impressive and elaborate of the ὀχθήσας addresses, and one which must be considered the counterpart of Hector's soliloquy in Book 22, occurs as Achilles, greatly empassioned, tells Thetis of his intention to avenge the death of Patroclus despite the fact that this means his own death: now is the time, he says, to win glory and kill men (18.97–127). It is immediately before this speech that Thetis makes clear to Achilles that his death will follow soon after Hector's.[23] His reply combines qualities found in his ὀχθήσας responses to Patroclus and Xanthus. It at once acknowledges and signifies a major change in the course of action as in the case of his consent to Patroclus, but like his response to Xanthus it acknowledges at the same time a complete awareness of the consequences of his decision. In this speech both the inevitable series of events which follows Patroclus' entry into battle and the fate of Achilles, Hector, and the city of Troy, locked inextricably together, all come into focus for the first time. In the radiance of this awareness, Achilles, mortal as he is, takes a step towards the omniscience of Zeus. In

[21] For the gratuitous nature of the Agenor scene, see Fenik, "Stylization and Variety," (above, note 5) 78.

[22] In Book 22, Apollo warns Achilles to withdraw, as Apollo had previously warned Diomedes and Patroclus, telling Achilles that it is futile for a mortal to contend with a god. Achilles' *ochthêsas* reply (22.14–21), in both its venom and acknowledgement of Apollo's superiority, closely parallels Poseidon's recognition of and submission to his fated position vis-a-vis his brother. Compare Diomedes' response to Apollo's intervention, 5.435–36 (see also the warning of Zeus to Diomedes, cited above, 8.167–70); for Patroclus and Apollo, 16.698–711 and 784–96.

[23] Only after the death of Patroclus do we, and perhaps Achilles too, learn that his death is intricately bound up with Hector's. The domino effect begins with the death of Sarpedon, which precipitates the rest, Patroclus, Hector, Achilles (cf. 15.64–77).

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entering battle, he now embarks with full knowledge upon a path that will alter the direction of his life and that of the war. As Achilles gains in Book 18 an illusionless foreknowledge of his death, Hector in the same book sharply moves in the opposite direction, deluded by a mistaken confidence in Zeus and in his own military prowess (18.284–311).[24]

III. The Uniqueness of Achilles

Other heroes only experience a prophetic vision of their own death as they are on the verge of death itself (thus Patroclus, 16.854–55; Hector, 22.355–61, cf. 22.295–307).[25] In the vicarious experience of his death through that of Patroclus (and in the report of Thetis), Achilles gains a preview of his death long before it happens. Such heightened awareness puts him in a category above other heroes and frees him from the kind of mental torment exhibited by most mortals as they confront the possibility of their own death. The contrast between the inner monologues of Achilles and those of other mortals makes evident, in part, that difference in vision.

Such freedom from illusion places Achilles alongside the divine. Both his ὀχθήσας speeches (to Patroclus, Thetis, Xanthus, and Apollo, discussed in note 22) and those of Zeus record anguish and clarity of vision, as yet imperfectly perceived by Achilles in his reply to Patroclus, as the two consent to major changes in the direction of war or articulate the fate of things. Unlike the decisions of Zeus concerning the course of the war or the destiny of Troy, the decisions and articulations of Achilles directly affect himself. Neither Zeus nor the other Olympians in their deathlessness can ever match the seriousness of Achilles in his mortality. Like so many of the parallels between human and divine, this one too dramatizes the gulf between the finality of human affairs and the comparative casualness of divine being.

Achilles, however, is not only hotly engaged in the moment, but like Zeus he is above the action, νόσφι λιασθείς "retired at a distance" to use a phrase used exclusively of Achilles and Zeus, so that he can in effect plan the course of destiny and see the meaning of his human activity within a larger frame.[26] In contrast to other mortals who appear

[24] For further discussion of the importance of Book 18 in the changing relation between Achilles and Hector, see my "The *Polis* in Homer: A Definition and Interpretation," *Ramus* 10 (1981) 15–17.

[25] Compare, in particular, Hector's final soliloquy once he has realized the false nature of the Deiphobus/Athena figure. In this speech, he speaks without hesitation, ambiguity, or the comparative, and sees, for the first time really, the true nature of his destiny (22.297–305).

[26] For other similarities between Achilles and Zeus, see C. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) 225–30 and 136–42; cf. James Redfield, "The Proem of the *Iliad*: Homer's Art," *CP* 74 (1979) 90–105, esp. 97–98 and 101, note 17. See

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embroiled within the mesh of circumstances, Achilles alone can understand and live on terms familiar to Zeus and the other gods. Both his soliloquies and ὀχθήσας addresses to others manifest that wider perspective and personal detachment associated with Olympian vision.[27] His elevation towards the divine after he learns of Patroclus' death is well-attested in the poem. Hephaistos' new armor replaces that which was given to Achilles by Peleus and which honored the marriage day between his mortal father and goddess mother. With this exclusively divine armor, which lifts Achilles as if it were wings (19.385–86), "human ties have vanished utterly, and what remains, the inner divine force . . . reveals itself coldly in an agonized, overwhelming will to death. Achilles has given himself with his armor to Patroclus, and now he has no self."[28] At this time, Zeus, through the agency of Athena, feeds him ambrosia and nectar when he refuses food and drink (19.340–56). The immortal Xanthus and Balius carry their master to war without the company of the mortal tracehorse, Pedasus, killed in the Patrocleia. When in battle, Achilles becomes, in an unusual break from Homeric naturalism, an elemental force of fire which triumphs in its duel with Troy's sacred river.

Because the nature of formulaic composition tends to frame common experience in stereotypic form, the speeches of Achilles between Books 16 and 22 acquire greater significance than those passages might indicate in and of themselves. In these books we see by formulaic comparison that he is lifted up out of the common language and suspended between man and god, both because he uses stereotypic patterns which outline choice in a manner that differs from other heroes and because he is associated with other patterns generally employed for the gods. Such a suspension between man and god is not unexpected since from the first word of the poem the hero, through his wrath, has been associated with the divine. A study of the language patterns for deliberation suggests,

also J. R. Wilson, "The Wedding Gifts of Peleus," *Phoenix* 28 (1974) 385–89. As Whitman and Redfield show, at all points throughout the poem, Achilles displays a broader perspective than that of any other mortal. Or as Charles Segal writes, Achilles is the "only hero who gazes out into the broad horizons of the 'limitless sea' (1.350; cf. 23.143) or who commands the vast distances of 'shadowy mountains and echoing sea' (1.156–57)," "Nestor and the Honor of Achilles," *SMEA* 13 (1971) 105. Wilson, more specifically, comments on the "freedom from illusion" which Achilles after the death of Patroclus shares with Zeus. See also James Hogan, "Double *prin* and the Language of Achilles," *CJ* 71 (1976) 305–10, who finds in the later books similarities between the language of Zeus and Achilles, especially in what he calls Achilles' stubborn and head-strong nature.

[27] For a sudden shift in Achilles' thought patterns after Hector's death, see an either/or construction followed by "But why did my heart consider these things?" (22.383–85) as he considers whether or not the Trojans will continue in war after their leader's death. He then breaks off this train of thought as he remembers the unburied body of Patroclus. (There is no *ochthêsas* preface.)

[28] Whitman (above, note 26) 203.

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however, a change and progression in Achilles towards greater individuality and divergence from mankind as his unique situation is defined over the space of the poem.[29]

In speaking of the language of Achilles, and more broadly of Homer, Adam Parry has stated:[30] "The formulaic character of Homer's language means that everything in the world is regularly presented as all men (all men within the poem, that is) regularly perceive it. The style of Homer emphasizes constantly the accepted attitude toward each thing in the world, and this makes for a great unity of experience." Parry means, in part, to suggest that within epic society there is linguistically, as well as in other ways, a rejection of individualism and idiosyncratic outlook. The character Thersites, qualified by the epithet *ametroepes*, whose mind is filled "with many disordered words" (2.212–13), and the treatment he receives at the hands of Odysseus indicate the kind of esteem in which Iliadic society holds deviation from inherited patterns. But Parry also means that traditional epic diction is not capable of creating a new language to express unconventional thought or experience: "Neither Homer . . . in his own person as narrator, nor the characters he dramatizes, can speak any language other than the one which reflects the assumptions of heroic society" (p. 6). In this sense I think Parry's claim is wrong. The formulaic character of epic language need not also necessitate "a unity of expression." Although Achilles does not challenge the assumptions of his society after Book 16, either he himself uses, or Homer associates him with, a startling adaptation of "available" language. The quality or "regularity" of formulaic expression in this case allows the poet to establish a linguistic norm, or pattern of expectation, here specific to a single poem, which he plays against at his discretion. That is, the unparalleled usage of language with Achilles between Books 16 and 22 acquires its force, even if only subliminally picked up by the audience, from its resonance against the familiar.

[29] The uniqueness of Achilles in the language of deliberation is most pronounced after the departure of Patroclus into battle, when Achilles' wrath is "formally" ended and a new stage of the poem commences. For a discussion of "stages" in Achilles' wrath, see Samuel Bassett, "The Introductions of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*," *CW* 27 (1934–35) 105–10 and 113–18. Against B. Snell (above, note 3) as Fenik argues from the evidence of the four monologues of deliberation for secondary characters (above, note 5), we see that characters in Homer do think, express internal struggle, and make independent decisions derived from the heart. Furthermore, the evidence from the Achillean usage of these formulas after Book 16 suggests that individuals in exalted moments of clarity may transcend the either/or deliberation which Snell finds essential for internal expression and genuine ethical thinking. For a sweeping revision of Snell's general thesis, see R. Renehan, "The Meaning of Σῶμα in Homer," *CSCA* 12 (1979) 269–82.

[30] A. Parry, "The Language of Achilles," *TAPA* 87 (1956) 3.

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Hence Parry's argument needs to be qualified.[31] There are occasions in epic, as in all experience, when an individual transcends established patterns of expression or thought. The regularity of formulaic usage, as much as it creates unity of experience and a world internally verified by repetition, need not prevent exceptional individuals from pressing out against the boundaries of language, talking at the limits of convention, in response to the changing texture of experience.[32]

APPENDIX

The patterns identified in this study are specific to the *Iliad*. Although similar phrases to express deliberation are found in the *Odyssey*, the formulas do not build into the same kind of overall composition. The phrase *diandichtha mermêrizein* does not occur in the *Odyssey*, although *dicha . . . mermêrizein* does twice: 16.73–77 (in conversation, not the narrative) and 22.333–39, the latter with *kerdion*; cf. 24.235–40 also with *kerdion* although with a different introductory verb. The thoughts expressed in 19.524–34 are similar to those outlined in 16.73ff. and two lines occur in both (16.76–77 = 19.528–29), but in Book 19 the alternatives are prefaced by the uniliadic *dicha thumos orôretai* (524). Twice in the *Odyssey*, characters ponder (with *mermêrizein*) as they drift off to sleep without coming to any resolution over their deliberations: Penelope (in the narrative) is said to ponder whether her son escaped death from the suitors (4.789–93); and Odysseus (in conversation with Athena) ponders *how* he, a single man, will kill the suitors and if successful in that, where he could go to escape the consequences. He concludes his speech by asking Athena to consider these difficulties (20.38–43). For the frequent use of *mermêrizein* in the singular in the *Odyssey* without following either/or outline, see H. Erbse, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee* (Berlin 1972), 200–202. At 5.354 *mermêrizein* introduces an *ochthêsas* soliloquy. The *ochthêsas* soliloquies themselves do not parallel the form found in the *Iliad*. There are only three instances of this participle, all in Book 5 and all spoken by Odysseus. The

[31] See most recently the innovative study by P. Friedrich and J. Redfield, "Speech as a Personality Symbol: The Case of Achilles," *Language* 54 (1978) 263–88, where in a departure from the mainstream of Homeric analysis, they suggest the possibility of character differentiation in Homer at the level of syntax and style. Against this thesis, see G. Messing, "On Weighing Achilles' Winged Words," *Language* 57 (1981) 888–900 and their rejoinder 901–903. For other criticisms of Parry's theory that Homer "misuses" language, see David Claus, "*Aidos* in the language of Achilles," *TAPA* 105 (1975) 24ff. and M. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley 1974) 61f.; M. D. Reeve, "The Language of Achilles," *CQ* n.s. 23 (1973) 196–99. For further discussion of the uniqueness of Achilles' language, see O. Cramer, "Speech and Silence in the *Iliad*," *CJ* 71 (1976) 300–304.

[32] This article reflects the helpful criticism of several scholars, among whom I would like to thank especially Professor Charles Segal and the editor and referee of *TAPA*.

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emphasis is again on the fear of death, but here the thought and construction of the soliloquy differ from the Iliadic examples. The pattern is as follows:

ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλήτορα θυμόν·
"Ὤ μοι ἐγὼ δειλός, τί νύ μοι μήκιστα γένηται;
δείδω μὴ δὴ πάντα θεὰ νημερτέα εἶπεν, . . . (*Od.* 5.298–300)

G. Petersmann regards these Odyssean soliloquies as reflecting the first instance in Greek literature of man capable of making genuine choice, "Die Entscheidungsmonologe in den homerischen Epen," *Grazer Beiträge* 2 (1974) 147–69, esp. 157–65, but see the reasonable comments of Fenik regarding Snell's views on this matter, (above note 5) 70–71. For a *mermêrizein* construction also associated with *deidô*, see 4.791–92.

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